

KNIVES AND SHARPS SAFETY

Caterers, chefs and kitchen staff use a range of equipment for a variety of tasks, such as slicing, dicing, cutting and dough mixing. Moving parts on cutting equipment have a high potential to cause injuries, such as lacerations and bruising. Knife accidents are extremely common with injuries usually occurring to the 'non-knife' hand.

- Ensure that steels for knife sharpening are provided with hand guards.
- Provide guarding on slicing machines.
- Knife handles must be comfortable to use.
- Ensure all cutting machinery is fixed firmly to the bench.
- Knives should be well maintained and kept sharp.
- The correct knife for the task should always be used.
- Never leave knives in washing up water – cuts often happen when a person cannot see a knife in cloudy water.
- Always use a stable surface, such as a cutting board, when using a knife.
- Cut away from the body.
- Store knives safely in a rack or knife block with blades pointing towards the back.
- Never try to catch a falling knife.
- When cutting, allow yourself plenty of workspace so there is no chance of being bumped.
- Always carry knives with blades pointing downwards.
- Do not leave knives on benches and worktops.
- Training should be provided in correct knife and sharpening techniques.

